

Profiles of Adjudicators

Chek Yui Hong (Singapore)

Musician and educator Chek Yui Hong is well versed in both Chinese traditional and Western classical music. Her studies in both music cultures began when she took up *guzheng* and piano at the ages of five and seven respectively. At nine, she was awarded 2nd prize in the Guzheng Junior category of the National Music Competition. Two years later, she achieved 1st prize in the Guzheng Senior category, and in 1993 won 1st prize in the Guzheng Open category.

She has performed extensively as a soloist and in ensembles and orchestras including the Singapore Youth Chinese Orchestra and the Singapore Youth Orchestra, where she played the harp. In 1995, armed with a Public Service Commission Scholarship, she majored in orchestral and choral conducting at the University of Birmingham (United Kingdom), and also studied piano and harp, graduating with an honours degree in 1998.

Currently, Chek teaches music and oversees the Higher Music, 'A' level music, and other aesthetics programmes at the Nanyang Girls' High School. Under her baton, the school's Chinese orchestra has won the Gold and Finalist awards at the 2001 Singapore Youth Festival, and the Gold-with-Honours award at the 2005 and 2007 Singapore Youth Festival Central Judging of Chinese Orchestras.

Ling Hock Siang (Singapore)

Ling Hock Siang was awarded the National Arts Council's Arts Bursary (Overseas) in 1993 to pursue a degree at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, majoring in *erhu* and violin, under Professors Wang Yong De and Zhao Dan Qing respectively. In 2002 he pursued a Masters degree in Erhu Performance at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music while on scholarships from the Lee Foundation and Singapore Hokkien Huay Kuan and graduated in 2005.

Ling joined the Singapore Chinese Orchestra (SCO) in 1997 and is currently the Erhu Associate Principal. The SCO has organised for Ling recitals entitled *Melodies with a Difference* (1999), *Hock Siang and Friends* (2005) and *Oriental Folk Music – An Erhu and Guan Performance* (2007). Ling is also a member of the Huqin Quartet and has performed with the group and the SCO in Beijing, Shanghai, Xiamen, Taiwan, Budapest, London, Gateshead, Australia, New Zealand, the USA, Japan, Korea and Malaysia. He is also an instructor in the City Chinese Orchestra and the Ministry of Education's East Zone Schools Chinese Orchestra Music Development Centre.

In 2004 Ling was awarded the Young Artist Award by the National Arts Council, and the Singapore Youth Award (Cultural and Arts Team Category, The Huqin Quartet) by the National Youth Council.

Liu Bin (Singapore)

Liu Bin studied composing and conducting under Professors He Zhan Hao and Xia Fei Yun at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, graduating with top honours in 1984. In 1992 he obtained his Masters degree in Music Analytics from Paris Conservatory of

Music and settled in Singapore, working as the Artistic Director for NAXOS Singapore and composing works for Chinese orchestras and events in the region. His works have been recorded and performed by various orchestras, including the Singapore Chinese Orchestra and Taipei Chinese Orchestra, to critical acclaim.

Liu has lectured at the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts and continues to be a music educator. He established his company – Liu Bin Cultural Arts – in 1998 and was awarded the Artistic Excellence Award by the Composers and Authors Society of Singapore in 2001. He published several collections of his compositions including *Gong Hanging in the Sky* (2004), and *Liu Bin's Art Songs* (2005). He has served on adjudicating panels of international music competitions and also writes music commentaries for the *Lianhe Zaobao*. He is currently the President of the National Theatre Club of Singapore and a member of the Association of Composers (Singapore).

Lum Yan Sing (Singapore)

Lum Yan Sing is Assistant Director of the National University of Singapore's (NUS) Centre for the Arts (CFA), Chief Examiner for CFA's Chinese Instrumental Examination, Music Director cum Resident Conductor of the NUS Chinese Orchestra (NUSCO), and Leader of Kent Ridge Ensembles' Xin Yun Quintet. He has led NUSCO and the Xin Yun Quintet on many successful international tours.

Lum's illustrious musical career over the last three decades includes key appointments as concertmaster and assistant conductor at the then People's Association Chinese Orchestra and Singapore Chinese Orchestra. He was the first foreign soloist to be invited to stage an *erhu* solo recital in China, and was awarded 2nd prize at the 1974 World Music Instrumental Competition, UK. A sought after conductor and performer, Lum has guest conducted and performed with the China Central Chinese Orchestra, Beijing Chinese Orchestra and Singapore Symphony Orchestra. He has also performed at the first International Jazz Festival and recorded with pop artistes in the region.

As an educator, Lum plays advisory roles and conducts Chinese orchestras of many schools and music associations in Singapore and Malaysia. He also serves on the adjudicating panels of various music competitions. For his achievements, Lum was honored with a Gold Medal by the SOKA University, Tokyo, in 2000, and profiled in the *Encyclopedia of Modern Chinese Erhu Music* published by the Tianjin Conservatory Research Institute.

Major (Ret) Tay Soon Huat (Singapore)

Major (Ret) Tay Soon Huat is a well known and respected veteran flautist in the Singapore music scene and is actively involved in the culture and roots of traditional Chinese Opera and orchestral music.

His conducting credits include the Singapore Chinese Orchestra's (SCO) *National Day Concert* in 2004, *Dream of the Red Chamber Grand Concert*, *Chinese Melodies in Symphony* by the Oriental National Symphony Orchestra of Xi'an conservatory of Music and 'live' music accompaniment to Singapore's first kung-fu musical in 2006.

Tay is currently the Senior Manager (Music) and Music Director of the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) Music and Drama Company, as well as the conductor of the Nanyang

Academy of Fine Arts Chinese Ensemble. Since 1995, he has also served as a board member in the SAF Bands.

He has adjudicated the Singapore Youth Festival Central Judging of Chinese Orchestras and the National Arts Council's National Chinese Music Competition. He also serves on the National University of Singapore Centre for the Arts' Chinese Instrumental Music Examinations Advisory Panel, the National Arts Council's Arts Resource Panel, Ministry of Education's Chinese Orchestra Education Resource Committee and the SCO's Artistic Committee.

Tay Teow Kiat (Singapore)

For over 30 years, Tay Teow Kiat has nurtured numerous young talents who are now professional musicians and conductors in their own right. His current appointments include: Music Director of the Ministry of Education's East Zone Schools Chinese Orchestra Music Development Centre and President of Singapore Chinese Instrumental Music Association. As Music Director of City Chinese Orchestra and Resident Conductor of Dunman High School Chinese Orchestra, he has led both orchestras to international acclaim. Tay is also the Music Director of Artssphere Chamber Ensemble

Tay has participated in numerous international Chinese music conferences and served on adjudicating panels of international music competitions. He also serves as honorary advisor and guest conductor to several music conservatories, Chinese music organisations and orchestras in Singapore and China.

In recognition of his artistic achievements and contributions, he was awarded the National Day Efficiency Medal in 1989, the Commendation Plaque for music and dance activities by the Extra Curricular Activities Centre in 1991, the Cultural Medallion in 1993 and the National Day Award – Long Service Medal (Education Service) in 1997. In 2005 he was a research scholar at the Beijing Normal University's Arts and Media Academy.

Zhang Nian Bing (Singapore)

Zhang Nian Bing is a well-known Chinese musician, educator and pioneer in Chinese string quintet performance. She is currently an Associate Professor at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. She also serves as a committee member of the Chinese Musicians' Association, and Vice-President of the Chinese Instrumental Music Association's Sanxian section in China. In Singapore, she serves on the Singapore Chinese Orchestra's Artistic Resource Panel and the National University of Singapore Centre for the Arts' Chinese Instrumental Examination Advisory Panel.

Zhang first majored in western classical music at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music in 1953. She furthered her studies in Chinese music, specialising in Chinese string instruments and graduated in 1965. Widely recognised for her bold and innovative performing techniques, Zhang has performed extensively in China, Japan, Yugoslavia, America, Singapore and Hong Kong and released several CDs and tapes, documenting her compositions. She frequently serves on the adjudicating panel for various major music competitions in China, Singapore and other countries.

Cheng Te-yuan (Taiwan)

Cheng Te-yuan is currently the Dean of Academic Affairs and Dean of the College of Music, Tainan National University of the Arts. He is also the Chairman of the Taiwan National Committee for the International Council for Traditional Music.

Cheng graduated with a Master degree from the Department of Hydraulic and Ocean Engineering, National Cheng Kung University. He received his doctorate from the University of Maryland, USA. A renowned academician in the areas of Chinese music and ethnomusicology, Cheng is also a *guzheng* master with vast experience in conducting and performing on the international stage. As a composer, he has written many works and won various prizes and awards over the years.

Cheng's past appointments included Music Director of the Broadcasting Corporation of China, Principal of the Taipei Hwa Kang Arts School, and Acting President of Tainan National University of the Arts.

Choo Boon-chong (Hong Kong)

Born in Singapore, Choo Boon-chong joined the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra (HKCO) in 1979, where he is currently Associate Dizi Principal. His forte is in the performance of the *bangdi*, where he demonstrates excellent fingering and breathing techniques and performing with ease for the upper register notes.

Choo has performed with the HKCO many parts of the world and is also often invited to perform as a guest soloist for other orchestras. In 2003 on behalf of the HKCO, he was invited to participate in the soundtrack recording of Columbia Pictures' *Warriors of Heaven and Earth* in India.

For many years, he has served as an adjudicator for the Hong Kong Schools' Music Festival. Choo is also the chairman of the Hong Kong Bamboo Flute Society and a member of the Chinese Association for Symphonic Bands and Ensembles.

George Gao Shao Qing (Toronto)

Erhu virtuoso George Gao began learning the *erhu* at the age of six and staged his first solo performance at the age of eight. He studied both Chinese and western music, as well as conducting at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, and graduated with honours in 1988. Between 1979 and 1989, Gao won numerous prizes at music competitions in China.

In 1991 the award-winning performer settled in Canada where he teaches at the Royal Conservatory of Music. He continues to perform extensively in Canada, the USA and Asia to critical acclaim. As a composer, Gao has been experimenting with the fusion of traditional Chinese music and western musical styles, and pushing the boundaries of *erhu* performance on the world stage. Recently Gao has composed theme music and soundtracks for several films directed by award-winning directors. He has also recorded for numerous films and television series, including the highly popular sci-fi TV drama *Earth: Final Conflict*.

Li Ling Ling (Beijing)

Renowned *yangqin* performer, Li Ling Ling, is currently a professor and tutor of postgraduate studies at the China Conservatory of Music, Beijing. She serves as a member in the Dulcimer World Association, Chinese Instrumental Music Association, and China Musicians' Association. Li began her music studies in 1987 under the tutelage of renowned masters Xiang Zuhua and Li Xi'an, and became the first female in China to obtain a postgraduate degree in *yangqin* performance at the China Conservatory of Music. In 1996 and 2005 Li was hailed as one of Beijing's most outstanding youth teachers.

An award-winning performer, Li has staged several well-received solo recitals in Europe and Asia, and has made numerous CD and television recordings which enjoy a wide distribution in China. Li is actively involved in the research and development of the instrument, and the art of *yangqin* performance and pedagogy. In 2004 she founded and presented the first *yangqin* ensemble in China, pushing the frontier of *yangqin* performance.

Wang Jian Min (Shanghai)

Wang Jian Min, composer, is currently a professor and Head of the Folk Music Department at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. He is also the Vice President of the Chinese Instrumental Music Association and a member of the China Musicians' Association.

Since Wang's musical career began, Wang has composed a wide repertoire, particularly in the genre of Chinese instrumental music. Many of his works are widely circulated and adopted as set pieces in music competitions in China and beyond, and some 30 pieces of his works were awarded prizes at composition competitions. Wang has also recorded several CDs, and presented over 10 research papers and published two collections of his works.

Yang Jing (Beijing)

Renowned *pipa* performer Yang Jing is currently a professor and tutor of postgraduate studies at the China Conservatory of Music, Beijing, and holds key positions at various artistic and musical organisations in China. Yang began learning *pipa* at a young age, and studied under the foremost *pipa* masters such as Liu Dehai, Zhou Qian, Fang Bingyun, Zhang Pingzhou and Yang Dajun.

Yang has won several prizes in many music competitions in China between 1980 and 1995. She has traveled extensively to prestigious music and arts festivals in Europe, the USA, and Asia, performing with symphony orchestras and Chinese orchestras. She has also made numerous CD and television recordings on *pipa* performance.

As a teacher, Yang is actively involved in the development of young musical talent. She has nurtured many *pipa* performers who are prize winners of major music competitions in China. She has also published articles and educational references on the art of *pipa* performance.